

Time itself may be twisted by his visionary
 hands into a
 thing of space, with all the tortured ingenuity
 of a Donne—
 and yet one does not really have a sense of
 torture, so
 much does his mind seem at home in its
 own strange
 labyrinths:

I have said that Time
 Is a great river running to Eternity.
 Methinks 'tis all one water, and the
 fragments
 That crumble off our ever-dwindling life,
 Dropping into it, first make the twelve-houred
 circle,
 And mat spreads outward to the great round
 Ever.

Or again:

I begin to hear
 Strange but sweet sounds, and the loud rocky
 dashing
 Of waves where Time into Eternity
 Falls over ruined worlds.

It is this unusual power of at once thinking so
 abstractly
 and seeing so concretely, that makes him
 master of the
 macabre. For the macabre only too easily
 becomes a
 little vulgar. Poe can be frightful in quite
 another sense
 of the word than he intended. Cemeteries
 are no very*
 healthy dancing-ground for the Muses, and
 not much
 real music has been got from bones. But
 Beddoes, though
 he has his lapses, has learnt that the hinted
 can be far more
 terrible than the explicit. In one of his scenes,
 for instance,
 a festive gathering is haunted by spectres:

There were more shadows there, than there
 were men.

Or again, before his vision a plague-infected
 air becomes

Transparent as the glass of poisoned water
 Through which the drinker sees his murderer
 smiling.

What a concentrated brevity of horror—as if
the picture
were drawn on the thumbnail of the
assassin! Or again,
the earth's roundness—what is its cause?
The answer of
Beddoes is all his own: